

# Body Alchemy

TRANSSEXUAL PORTRAITS



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TRANSSEXUAL PORTRAITS

BY LOREN CAMERON



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Published in the United States by Cleis Press Inc.  
P.O. Box 8933, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15221, and  
P.O. Box 14684, San Francisco, California 94114.

Printed in Hong Kong.

Cover and text design: Bernie Schimbke

Logo art: Juana Alicia

First Edition.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Cameron, Loren, 1959-

BODY ALCHEMY: photographs / by Loren Cameron

p. cm.

ISBN 1-57344-063-9m (cloth). — ISBN 1-57344-062-0 (pbk.)

1. Transsexualism—United States. 2. Transsexuals—United States—Portraits.

3. Transsexuals—United States—Interviews. I. Title

HQ77.95.U6C36 1996

96-25696

305.3—dc20

cip

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Way Big Thanks to Kathleen Aird, Carrie Ann Calay, Hali Croner, Iris Davis, Barbara DeGenovieve, John Paul, Isabella Radtma, Rachel Snodgrass, Kayt Steele, Susan Stryker and Julia Thompson.

All pre-sex reassignment photographs are copy negatives, printed by Loren Cameron. Shadow Morton's "Before" photograph was taken by Scott Martin © 1987.

Book epigraph from "What's in a Name?" by Jeffrey Maitland, Ph.D.  
*Massage Therapy Journal*, Fall 1994, vol. 33, no. 4.

The Law of Thelema by Aleister Crowley from the *Ordo Templi Orientis*.

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To the brave people in these photographs  
and for the thousands of people who are like them.

Philosophical alchemy is the art of transforming what stands in misery, conflict, fixation, and confusion (the prime matter or *prima materia*) and allowing it to come to presence freely and completely as itself (the ultimate matter or *ultima materia*).... Transformation is the art of allowing our essential nature, as body-mind-spirit, to manifest completely and freely without conflict and fixation. It is the art of freeing the whole person, body and all. It is not the willful attempt to change who and what we are, but the art of becoming who we are.

— Jeffrey Mantland

# Introduction

My affinity for photography began as early as I can remember. My parents had lots of photo books with pictures of The War and pre-World War Two America. There, I first saw images by Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange, who greatly influenced my artistic and aesthetic sensibilities. My father had stories of his own about what it was like to grow up in Iowa near the end of the Great Depression. He and his siblings would scour the railroad tracks to find bits of coal that had fallen from the trains' coal cars, and he quit school at thirteen so he could work to feed his family. Through Lange's photographs, I gained a visual understanding of my father's stories about working-class survival. Her images touched me deeply and helped me understand his tough attitude about living and his generation's no-nonsense work ethic, as well as the universality of the human condition of pain, strife and the will to persevere.

I've looked to these images from the past to learn something of compassion and a sense of the heroic. In my own life, along with my father's words, they have taught me to honor labor and to keep putting one foot in front of the other. Being drawn to photography as a medium of expression seems only natural for me, given the emotional impact it has had on my life. It has been the most powerful teaching tool for me to date, and I feel the message in my work isn't very different from Lange's or Evans': it is a vision about strength and will and everyday people.

**A** tomboy as a child, I shunned dresses and rolling down my socks. I loved playing Army games, and my favorite doll was a G.I. Joe. When my mother died in 1968, I moved from Pasadena, California to rural Arkansas to live with my father, his wife and her two teenage children. I didn't see my three sisters again until I was nearly twenty.

My father's farm was just outside a small rural town of thirteen hundred people at the foot of the Ozark Mountains. He raised horses for the love of them and was employed at the nearby nuclear plant. A lot of my adolescence and early teens

were spent working with my father, building fences and feeding the horses. In my spare time after school, I explored the lush and wild countryside with my small pack of canine companions. Many afternoons were lazed-away on the bank of a pond while I fished for perch and daydreamed.

At the onset of puberty, that slightly insane time in all our lives, I grew very restless and became a regular fixture down at the local greasy spoon in town. I dressed in overalls and workboots and learned to swear like a trucker and smoke cigarettes and marijuana. I loved anything daring and adventurous. My friends and I rafted swollen rivers, drag-raced, rode crazy horses and ran from cops.

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During my teens and even before then, I had begun to feel terrifically uncomfortable as a female-bodied person. When I was twelve years old, I heard of people changing sex, and I even wrote away for information. But who could I tell? Who would understand what even I could barely verbalize? I could only wear baggy clothing to hide my ever-developing breasts and somehow learn to cope with the inconvenience of menstruation. At about seventeen, I had barely begun to experiment sexually with boys when one of my older female friends returned home on leave from the Army. As we took a pleasant drive down a dirt road, she very carefully inquired about whether I had ever considered being a lesbian. The thought hadn't even occurred to me. I was elated at the suggestion! Why not? If I couldn't be a boy, then I could be a dyke! Come to think of it, women were very attractive!

Unfortunately, my excitement wasn't shared by my heterosexual friends. Like greased lightning, the news of my new-found identity got around town. It took even less time for all of my friends to turn their backs on me. I was in my junior year of high school where I had been unexpectedly elected class president and student council president. All of a sudden, I was outcast.

Finding no support or solace, I quit school and ran away

from home. I spent the next couple of years struggling to survive and taking long bus rides across the States, trying to see the world beyond that small place. Working labor jobs—straw picking and construction clean-up—I barely got by. I returned to Arkansas, not having found the place to call home, and worked until I felt the urge to buy the next bus ticket. I ran a truckstop fuel station for a while, then I got a job on a youth conservation-corps crew. One day, while I was mixing cement for a rock wall we were building, these two very lesbian-looking women approached from a nearby campground. They were from San Francisco. Within a few hours of friendly conversation, these seemingly sophisticated dykes convinced me that my fame and fortune were to be found in a city by the ocean. Weeks later, I purchased my last bus ticket, grabbed my duffel bag and went out West.

I had lived in the San Francisco lesbian scene for nine years, when at twenty-six, I finally began to address my discomfort about my gender. I can only speculate about the timing. Maybe it was because I was finally living by myself and didn't have to contend with any negative peer pressure, or maybe I was finally old enough to deal with it. Other things had changed too. I had quit smoking pot and tobacco, which I suspect had, until then, suppressed my feelings. In addition, I was recovering from the failure of a very passionate relationship that had left me devastated. For the first time in my life, I wasn't numb.

The need to change became all-consuming: I started the step-by-step process of therapy, doctors and surgeons. Taking testosterone as hormone therapy and developing a body-building regimen, I ever so slowly and painfully began to reinvent myself. I photographed myself and sent amateur snapshots to friends and family in order to show them how happy I was; I wanted them to get used to the idea of my body being different. If they could see my new beard and chest sans breasts, perhaps it would be easier for them to accept my new identity. You know, so they would stop calling me "she." I was excited, too, much like when I had discovered my sexuality as a teenager. Only this time, I refused to feel any shame. I was creating a beautiful new body image, and I was proud of it.

What was initially a crude documentation of my own personal journey gradually evolved into a med mission. Impulsively, I began to photograph other transsexuals that I knew, seeing compelled to make images of their emotional and physical triumphs. I was fueled by my need to be validated and wanted, in turn, to validate them. I wanted the world to see us, I mean, really see us.

Since I had no formal training, I took a basic photography class to print my images. My first work was done with a ~~small~~ <sup>135</sup> ~~35mm~~ <sup>35mm</sup> ~~film~~ <sup>film</sup> ~~camera~~ <sup>camera</sup> ~~Ilford~~ <sup>Ilford</sup> K1000. Within a year, I managed to have my ~~work~~ <sup>work</sup> ~~shown~~ <sup>shown</sup> which earned critical attention. After

In my ~~first~~ <sup>first</sup> ~~exhibit~~ <sup>exhibit</sup> one, I graduated from thirty-five millimeter to medium format. Still preferring the simplicity of a manual ~~camera~~ <sup>camera</sup>, I bought a used Pentax six by-seven box and a new one thirty-five macro lens. Finding the rectangular negative more appealing than the shape of a two-and-a-quarter inch square, I decided to continue using a ~~film~~ <sup>film</sup> camera. Besides, this Pentax was as durable as a tank: I could drop it and still be in the running. Transitioning to a larger negative helped me regard myself more seriously as a ~~photographer~~ <sup>photographer</sup> and others began to take ~~note~~ <sup>note</sup> of the photographs inspired new images.

Despite the challenges, the work has taken on a life of its own, and I am still ~~producing~~ <sup>producing</sup>. I use a shutter-release bulb in my self-portraits because I usually work alone, my camera doesn't have a shutter timer, so I have to press the shutter button myself. I actually prefer this method to ensure that the work is entirely of my own vision. People have asked me, however, why I don't try to conceal the bulb in the photographs. At times, given the composition of a photograph, concealing the bulb may not be possible. I also feel a certain pride in making a decent image without ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> through the lens, so I don't really mind that the bulb is ~~there~~ <sup>there</sup>. Its presence serves as a metaphor. I am creating my own image alone, an act that reflects the transsexual experience as well.

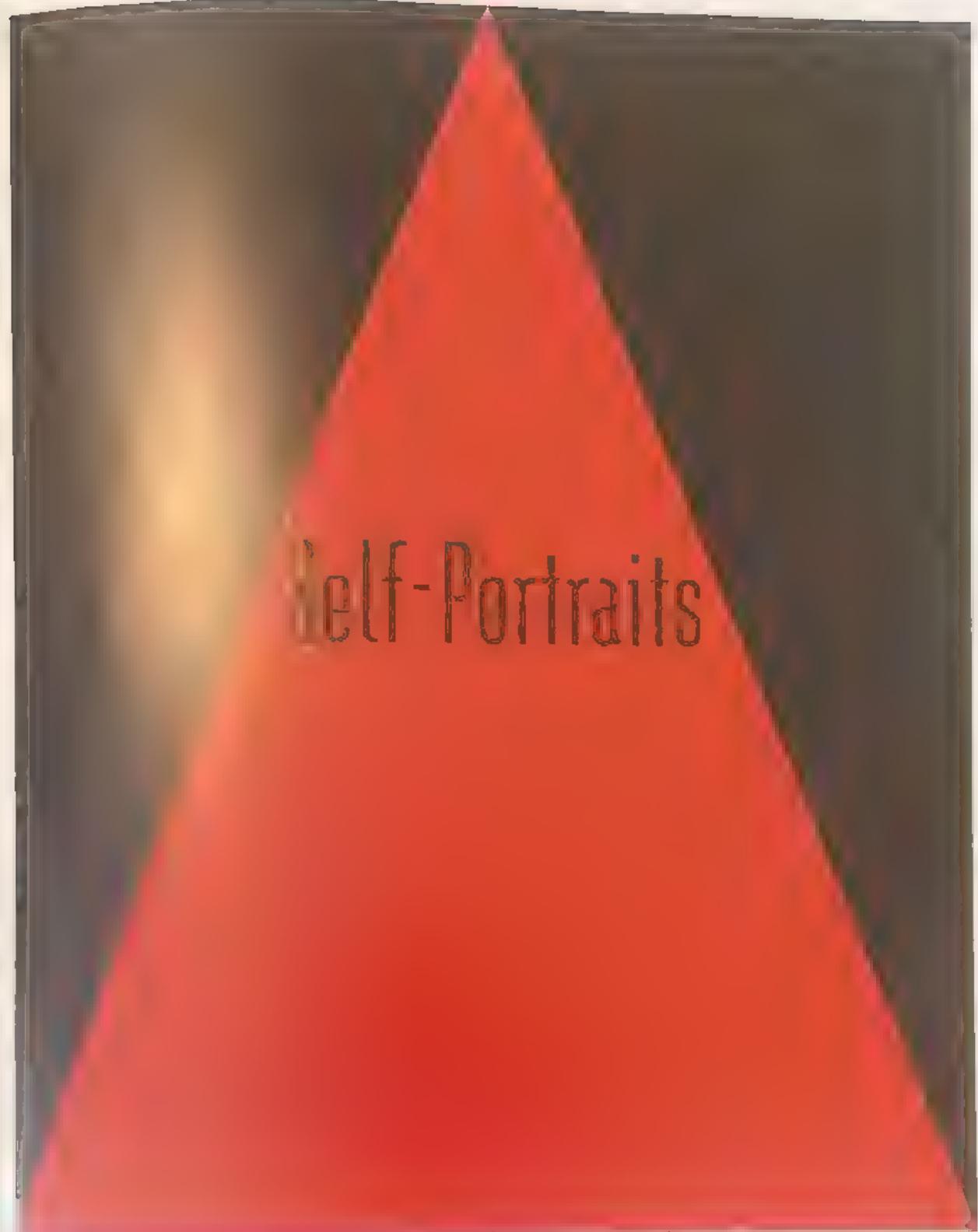
For the most part, I am a ~~homosexual~~ <sup>homosexual</sup> and sexually ~~arrested~~ <sup>arrested</sup> and I make no ~~secret~~ <sup>secret</sup> of my ~~sexual~~ <sup>sexual</sup> identity. I am ~~very~~ <sup>very</sup> ~~visible~~ <sup>visible</sup> to the dominant culture. Marginalized even within

the gay and lesbian subculture, transsexuals have occupied  
their own. In the last decade or so, more and  
more transsexual people have been speaking out about our  
lives. We are beginning to represent ourselves for the  
first time, to develop our own voice. *Body Alchemy* is the  
beginning of the creation of transsexual men from within.

**A**s I have often said, another movement paradigm is my intention to embrace and include in my work those people who may identify more comfortably as "transgender," or "gender transgressive." A growing number of people are and have been questioning the nature of representations of gender. Some have had medical and surgical enhancement, and many have not. Inhabiting a less static gender identification than that of typical transsexuals, they are exploring and experiencing a fluid range of gender embodiment. My own intimate partner, Kayt is one such individual. Ironically, it has been through knowing and loving her that I have gained an even deeper understanding of the mutable soul. Her flexible consciousness has encouraged me to be generous in my thinking and less rigid about the way others self-define, or in fact, when they choose not to.

In an effort to address these issues, I have produced a very personal project with Kayt. Along with my photo essay and its symbolic representations of the two of us, I have invited Kayt to write about her experience of being transgendered and about our sometimes conventional, sometimes unconventional relationship. We hope that this inclusion will offer yet another perspective on what it means to be transgendered.

Loren Cameron  
May 1996



# Self-Portraits



# Carney

Every time I tell someone I am a transsexual, I have a turbulent series of emotions. At first, I am afraid that whomever I'm telling will have a negative response, but I know I somehow be repelled and become hostile or in some way reject it. As I begin to speak, my heartbeat races and I feel my face flush with the heat of embarrassment. I am more and more anxious as the words fall out of my mouth, but I try to conceal my nervousness. My stomach tightens in knots.

But then, if I've been given a positive reception, I begin to spill talk with myopic enthusiasm, answering every question which at first encourages another. People are naturally curious, and I do have a real need to know. By revealing myself I have consciously invited their voyeurism, they can't help but watch as I make a spectacle of myself. Their attention and acceptance fuels my eagerness to tell. I feel unique in my own way. My unconscious self absorption however, leads me to compulsive indiscretions, and I easily disclose everything that is personal. To confide in them is both alluring and enchanting.

In the end, when I have spilled my guts or exhausted their interest, I begin to retreat a little. A grayness falls over me, and I realize that I feel unsafe. I feel naked. Self-doubt starts to poke holes in my ego, and I begin to think I have exploited myself: I am ashamed of my exhibitionism. I promise myself not to tell anyone ever again.

# Be Profunda

I'll never forget my first photo exhibition. I stood for hours on a cold and windy sidewalk and leafleted people. It seemed an effective way to draw people into the gallery, especially those who hadn't read about the show in the local papers. On the handbills, I had printed nude portraits of myself and another transsexual. They were provocative images and some samples of my work, but being so revealed placed me in a vulnerable position that was more than a little scary. I had strategically located myself in the gay and lesbian part of the city, where I felt most secure, in hope of finding a positive public. After a little while, working the crowded street, I realized that it wasn't as safe a place as I had thought. While many people were receptive, there were nearly as many who were indifferent or actively hostile. I remember feeling shocked as a man turned on me, crushing the flier into my hand while telling me how repulsive I was. Over and over, I watched as people laughed out loud or joked about our transsexual bodies. One woman, glancing at the piece of paper, actually sneered at me and flung it away from her. I was devastated. I endured it as long as I could, and then I retreated, feeling very alone. At home in my bed, still hearing their laughter and seeing their leering faces, I pulled the covers over me. I tried to push away their memory and the terrible feelings of shame, but my thoughts turned dark and full of anger. I despaired of ever belonging.





# Letters

Several men marched in the San Francisco Gay Parade in 1994. I had an  
adventure on one end of a banner that read *FTM*.  
I walked bare-chested with my head held  
high. I had no experience; just a handful of  
brave men to walk alongside hundreds of thousands of  
people. We were all nervous, and I remember  
whispering to myself to my banner mate to slow his pace.  
I was nervous to appear tall and fit. The moment in my  
mind I never wanted to watch people's reactions to us, and  
more than anything, I wanted to walk with dignity.

As we passed a stone wall over the crowd until we heard  
a round off ring of applause, occasionally punctuated with an  
outbreak of cheers. I glanced at my comrades to see their  
broad smiles when we heard boos. Every now and then  
I stampeded in the crowd a face full of contempt for us or saw  
an acquaintance who pretended not to see the wave. I felt a  
disturbing jumble of sadness and angry defiance; I forced  
myself to look into their eyes until they turned away.

Whether I marched in a parade or not, I  
think every transsexual understands what we felt that day.  
Each one of us has had to take a stand about our identity.  
When I photograph transsexuals, men or women, I ask about  
their histories. I know they have labored to arrive at the place  
where I've found them. They tell me about losing jobs and  
friends while going through transition, and how they fought  
to keep them. They talk about the people who love them and  
how difficult it is to make them understand. I see the strain  
in their voices as they speak to me, and I know they've been  
through so much. But more than anything, I hear the relief in  
their voices. Satisfied with their changed bodies, they each tell  
me how much better they feel, and that they would do it all  
over again if they had to. I marvel at their strength; like tempered  
steel, the kind that propels armies to liberation or a  
single-minded conviction. When I look through my lens at  
them, I recognize the power of such willfulness. I want the  
world to know the force of their beauty.

# Testosterone

I inject myself with a dose of testosterone every two weeks, the standard maintenance schedule for men like me. Between injections, the oil-based drug absorbs slowly through the muscle tissue. I admit I've become very attached to taking the hormone, which is responsible for all my physical masculine attributes, like my facial and body hair and muscle development. I've also noticed that it affects my sex drive and emotional state too. During the peak part of my cycle, I turn into a randy, greasy kind of guy who is more than a little irritable.

Learning to manage the emotional and physical effects of testosterone hasn't been easy. There are moments when I don't do well at all. I've had many regrettable fights with my partner that could have been avoided had it not been for the rapid escalation of my temper. It's hard to describe the way it makes me compulsively react to situations. Once, I actually punched a man on the street for verbally assaulting a woman. The anger I felt was exist and instinctual. My brain didn't have a second to consider the consequences before my fist was flying. Luckily, the man wasn't really hurt, and being a weenie, he just went away. What if he hadn't?

I have found that people in the body-building community are the most familiar with this kind of chemically induced behavior. They call it "Roid Rage." Fortunately, my occasional meltdowns are mild in comparison to what competitive athletes experience. Learning to recognize when I feel unusually agitated helps me get a grip and so does a good workout at the gym. Discontinuing the testosterone isn't really an option for me. Much of my identity hinges on it. Maybe, over time, medical science will find a more efficient way to administer this drug for transsexuals. Until then, it's a great lesson in self-control.



# The Suit

I bought my first fine Italian suit at a shop for men's clothing and under. My good friend Terence told me about the store, where he had shopped himself. He said men there could find a variety of suits from which to choose, despite my slight stature, and that the sale would be very rewarding since they were all short too. I was more than a little nervous about it. I knew next to nothing about men's fine clothing; I had never put on a tie or even owned a pair of dress pants.

Fortunately, Terence agreed to come with me for moral support, and I set out on one of my first coming-of-age adventures. Upon arrival, we were graciously met by a well-groomed fellow who quickly summed me up. Obviously I was a working-class joe who had never dressed a day in his life — not very far from the truth really. Relieved by his assumption, I was glad to avail myself of his expertise.

After what seemed like hours of deliberation about color and fabric, I finally made a selection. Marvin, the tailor, asked me to try on the suit so he could refine the fit of my manly new garment. While he measured and creased, he told me important things about being a man of taste: about the cut of a good tie, the difference between a Windsor and a Full Windsor, that I should never lean back in a chair while wearing a coat, and to always pull up my socks. I remember panic rising when Marvin asked which side I dressed on (I quickly thought about being right-handed). He speculated that women would find me irresistible in my lovely new suit and said that I must learn to slow dance. Marvin was adamant that I should never offer a rose on the first date; it should be a carnation instead. He also warned me that women who like ties can choke you in the heat of passion. BEWARE! Terence and I exchanged a quick glance at each other and laughed out loud. Boy, was I getting my money's worth — a tailored suit and free advice on dating etiquette!

After he showed me four different ways to fold my handkerchief, and I was out about six hundred dollars, Marvin patted me on the back and expounded on how all the world respects a man in a good suit. I felt at least two inches taller when I walked out of there, and it wasn't because of the suit.



# God's Will

But do you will that be the whole of the law  
Love the law, love under will.

—John Calvin







rtions

MEN ARE JERKS, WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO BE ONE?  
HOMOPHOBIC. YOUR VOICE DOESN'T SOUND

YOU WANT TO CUT OFF YOUR TITS? MAYBE YOU'RE JUST  
SEXUAL? YOU STILL LOOK FEMALE TO ME.

YOU'RE JUST A DYKE WITH A BEARD. ARE YOU MISOGYNIST?  
VERY MASCULINE. WHY CAN'T YOU JUST BE A BUTCH

DYKE? DOES THIS MEAN YOU'RE HETERO?  
I JUST CAN'T GET USED TO CALLING YOU "HE".



YOU'RE SO EXOTIC! MAY I TAKE YOUR PHOTO?  
MEAN I'M GAY: YOU'RE REALLY A WOMAN.

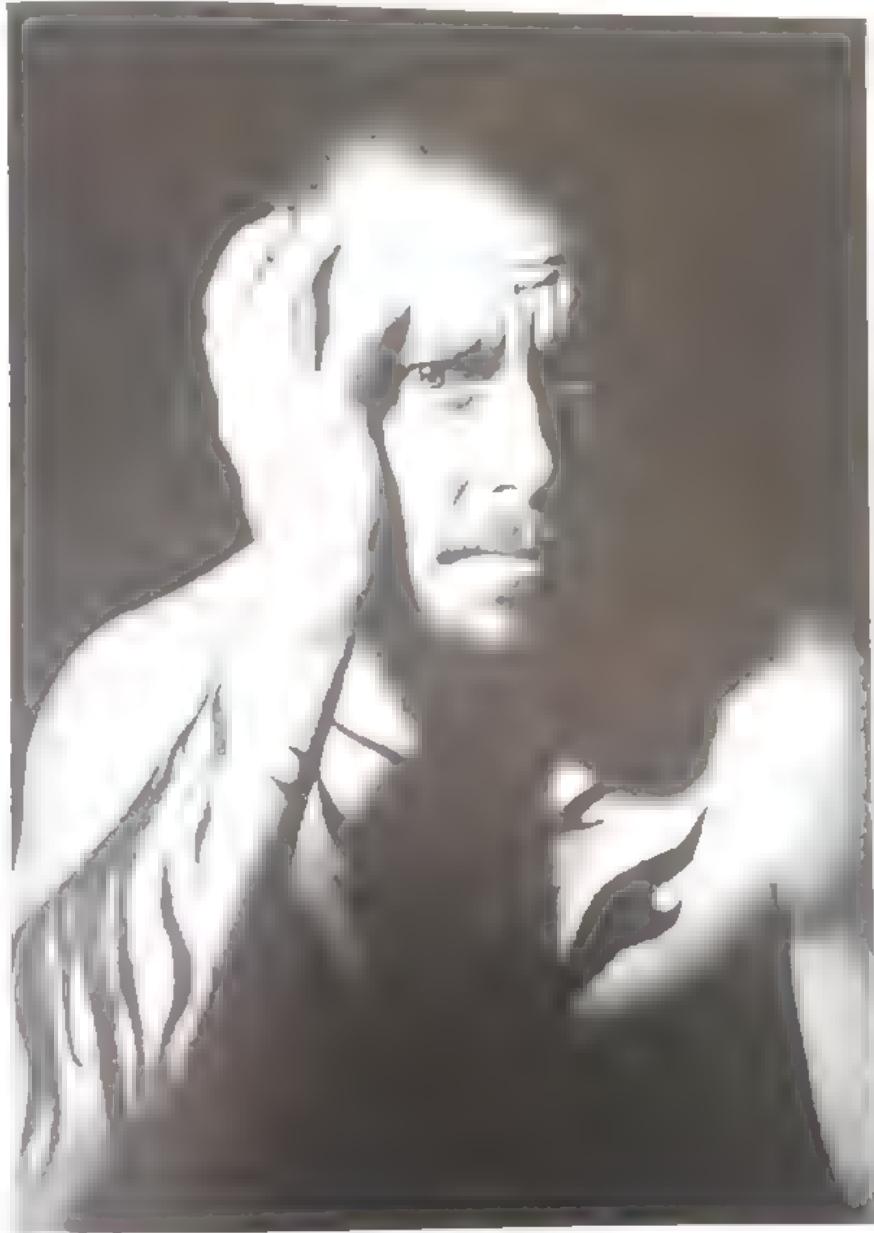
GRAPH? I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ATTRACTED TO HAIRY  
WOMEN. I THINK TRANSESSUALS ARE SEXY.  
INTRIGUE ME. MY ATTRACTION TO YOU DOESN'T  
COME FROM THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS. DO YOU HAVE A PENIS?



I LIKE VERY BULKY WOMEN. YOU'RE THE  
WOMEN. YOU'RE THE THIRD SEX! YOU'RE THE  
WORLD'S BEST OF BOTH WORLDS. DO YOU HAVE A PENIS?

THIS IS WOMYN-ONLY SPACE. WHERE'S YOUR  
YOU: I'M NOT A LESBIAN. DO YOU HAVE

MUST BE SOME KIND OF FREAK. I CAN'T BE WITH  
LIKE A WOMAN. YOU DON'T BELONG HERE.



DICK? SORRY, BUT I DON'T LIKE MEN. YOU'RE NOT A  
WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A REAL MAN? YOU'RE  
A MAN: YOU'LL NEVER SHOOT SPERM. YOU  
KIND OF SHOT, ARENT YOU? YOU PISS



# THE WORLD OF WINE

BY  
JOHN  
LEWIS

WITH  
ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY  
JOHN  
LEWIS

AND  
A  
FOREWORD  
BY  
JOHN  
LEWIS

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LEWIS

# Jeffrey Shevlowitz

I had no desire for a Bat Mitzvah (the female equivalent of a Bar Mitzvah). I never even wanted to learn Hebrew until I could go to a synagogue and be treated as a man there. Once I had my first changes and had my mother to my side, I began going to temple—Shuleforth Park—every week and eventually had my Bar Mitzvah.

My father never had a Bar Mitzvah ceremony, nor did my uncle or any brother, so my wife, I'm the only man in my family in at least two generations who

a) has gone through a Bar Mitzvah ceremony. For me, it was an affirmation of my heritage and who I am now. I traditionally, a young boy says during the ceremony, "Today I am a man." I always felt that this would be the perfect experience for me, and we thought I didn't understand up there on the Bema and no one else

in the room were certainly there.





# Matt Rice

I've been tending bar at a gay bar. The guys I work with have been fine. Sometimes when people find out they make pronoun slips that they wouldn't have made before. There are patrons who come into the bar and refer to me as "she" and won't change it, even when I've told them it's not appropriate.

It's about what is and isn't okay. You know, because the guys are all masculine and really hyperconscious of being masculine and don't want to be perceived as feminine because then they would be nelly and that's just not okay. (It's a bar bar: bears and bikers. Harleys and flannel shirts.)

But there are men at the bar who are incredibly supportive. In a lot of ways, I'm more empowered by men than by women. I've had a really hard time with dudes through my process. I've had lesbian lovers exclude me from their group because I made the decision to stop being a dad about my identity. Biker guys are very cool.

They're probably the most accepting of me. The ones who have become my friends have helped me explore how I feel about being a man, how I am a man differently than other people, and my connection to other men. Some have really helped me sort through what it is that I want to take on as part of being a man.

Many of my role models have been leathermen and perverts so they understand that a young queer man is someone non-traditional. I think some people assume that transsexuals have this sexual stereotype about how they're supposed to act, and I've had men tell me that I won't have to be that way. "You can be any way you want to be, and it doesn't make you less of a man."

# James Green

I wanted to be a man and I always looked to a spiritual community group. The group validated my masculinity, first of all, by accepting me as a man with no strings attached no questions. After about a year, I was asked to fill a leadership role, and at that point, I thought I should tell them about my history as a woman. After a short period, these men expressed admiration for me because of my transition to manhood.

Being in the group accelerated my acceptance of myself as a man. I went into this place that had concentrated male energy, dealt with male issues and never had my own masculine identity questioned or challenged. This experience in itself solidified my feeling that my masculinity was just fine the way it was.



# Erik

I am having to relearn how to be around women. You know, it's like being in high school again. When do you ask someone out, or just hang out? It's very different. I feel the same but I'm seen differently. I've always dressed and acted this way. I'm basically the same person, except before, I looked like a female.

I've heard how women talk about men, and I don't ever want to be that fool. I don't want to be misunderstood or seen as a threat because of what I look like. I like being a guy, and it has nothing to do with power. I just look like how I feel.



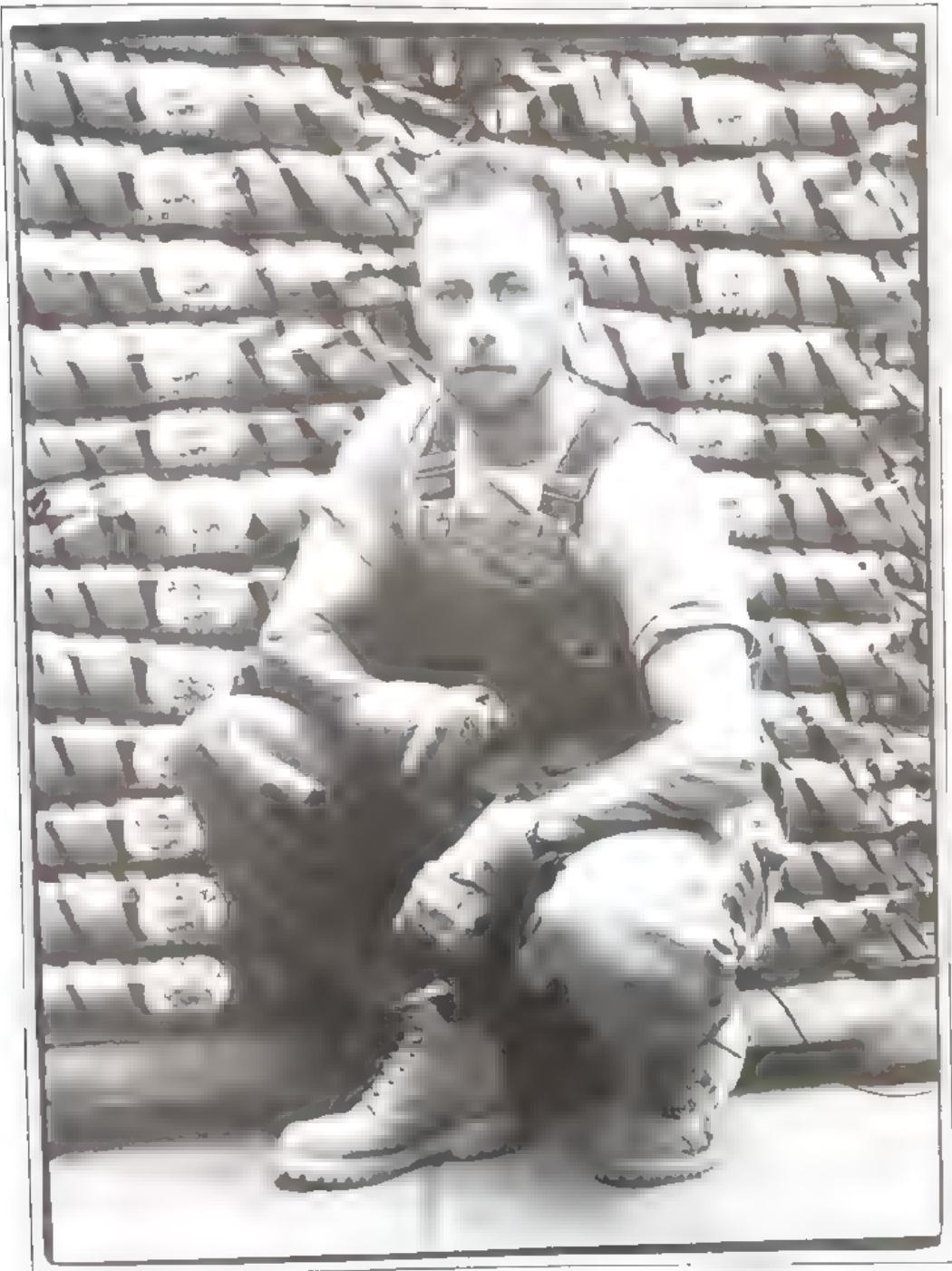
# Loren Cameron

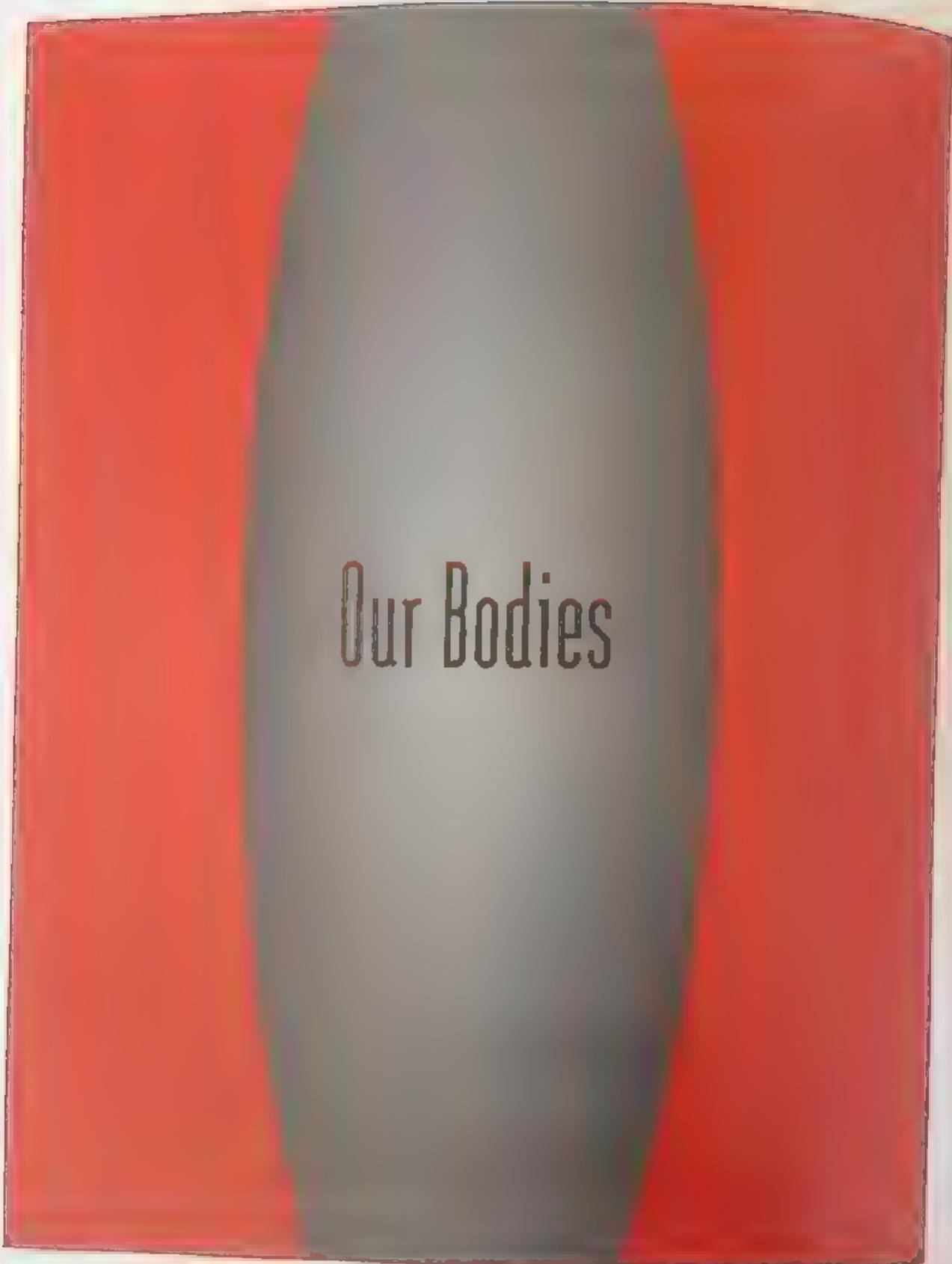
I learned a lot about hard work from my father. He taught me how to mend fences and haul hay, and sometimes we worked right into the night if rain was coming. He grew up during the Depression and quit school when he was thirteen to work to feed his family. He broke horses and attended night school to become an electrical engineer. When he died, he was the boss of a big nuclear plant.

My dad believed everybody should pull himself up by his own bootstraps, and even though I was his daughter, he raised me to have the same masculine work ethic. He was often impatient and a perfectionist and had trouble showing me that he loved me, but he had a real soft spot for animals. We always had lots of horses, about thirty or forty cats and a bunch of dogs. With them, you could see how sensitive he was.

I guess I'm a lot like him that way, and since my change, I look like him too. As I get older, it gets easier to understand and appreciate him for who he was—and to forgive and forget our differences.

The last time I saw him, he told me that I had a lot of guts to move to California with only a duffel bag and a hundred bucks in my pocket. I think if he could see me now, he would be proud to call me his son.





A photograph of a book standing upright. The book has a dark grey or black cover with a vertical red stripe running down the center. The title "Our Bodies" is printed in a large, serif font in the center of the cover. The book is set against a plain, light-colored background.

# Our Bodies

# Genital Reconstruction

The following images are of reconstructed genitalia. Two of them are presentations of a procedure known as "metaphaloplasty." The third model is an example of "penal shortening."

Metaphaloplasty, in simple terms, enlarges the clitoris through the use of the hormone testosterone. The clitoral hood then becomes a foreskin and silicone testes are implanted in the larger, outer labia. The clitoris is shaped like a small penis, to have a sexually responsive and become erect without prosthesis.

Phalloplasty—the construction of a penis—is an arduous graft from another part of the body, such as a flap of skin from the back, belly, thigh or forearm. A prosthetic device is implanted and after a complex surgical procedure, the new penis can be thrust into and become erect. A lie-one implant is in the outer labia, serving as testes.

It should be said that not every transsexual female wants genital reconstruction for reasons ranging from fear of surgical complication and discomfort to simply being unable to afford it. Some find the current surgical options unacceptable—either aesthetically or functionally. Others don't feel it is a matter of choice; they are too uncomfortable without it.

These are photos of three 3D silicon models.

Two of them are presentations of a procedure known as "metaphaloplasty." The third model is an example of "penal shortening."

Metaphaloplasty—the construction of a penis—is an arduous graft from another part of the body, such as a flap of skin from the back, belly, thigh or forearm. A prosthetic device is implanted and after a complex surgical procedure, the new penis can be thrust into and become erect. A lie-one implant is in the outer labia, serving as testes.

Phalloplasty—the construction of a penis—is an arduous graft from another part of the body, such as a flap of skin from the back, belly, thigh or forearm. A prosthetic device is implanted and after a complex surgical procedure, the new penis can be thrust into and become erect. A lie-one implant is in the outer labia, serving as testes.

It should be said that not every transsexual female wants genital reconstruction for reasons ranging from fear of surgical complication and discomfort to simply being unable to afford it. Some find the current surgical options unacceptable—either aesthetically or functionally. Others don't feel it is a matter of choice; they are too uncomfortable without it.

# Metoidioplasty: Subject 1

I've to wear two pairs of trunks at the swimming pool because I don't think the bulge in my pants is big enough. It's really obvious when my clothing is wet. Without a larger phallus, the testosterone implants alone just don't give the look I want. I try to appreciate what I have since my surgery, but it's hard when I live in a society that associates penis size with a man's worth.

I'm not convinced that most women are concerned with the size of a man's penis (even a guy with a small dick can do a lot of stuff), but I can't even ejaculate, much less penetrate! It isolates and handicaps me in an invisible sort of way. I'm really angry about it!

I don't always think I'm inadequate though. My last lover didn't seem to mind at all. In fact, I think she enjoyed not having to use a diaphragm or other contraceptives. She acted as though my size was normal. I guess it was good enough for her because she loved me.

If I were pressed to call it an enlarged clitoris, I would have to admit that that's what it is. It just can't function exactly like a penis. I wish I could delude myself, but I can't.





# Metoidioplasty: Subject 2

I feel better having my genitals on the outside of my body. That presentation is important to me, because I as a man in the world. Really, a day-to-day basis, it doesn't make that much difference. I mean, I don't wear tight pants, there's no bulge that shows, and I don't care about that anyway. But in terms of presenting myself to a potential partner, having genitalia that look somewhat like they're supposed to be, we feel confident.

Although I am very conscious of being different, I feel sure of myself as a lover. In my fantasies, I might imagine having a larger penis, but, in reality, it doesn't matter. My surgery is good enough. I have sexual function, and now I have a body that satisfies my needs: it reflects my own masculinity.

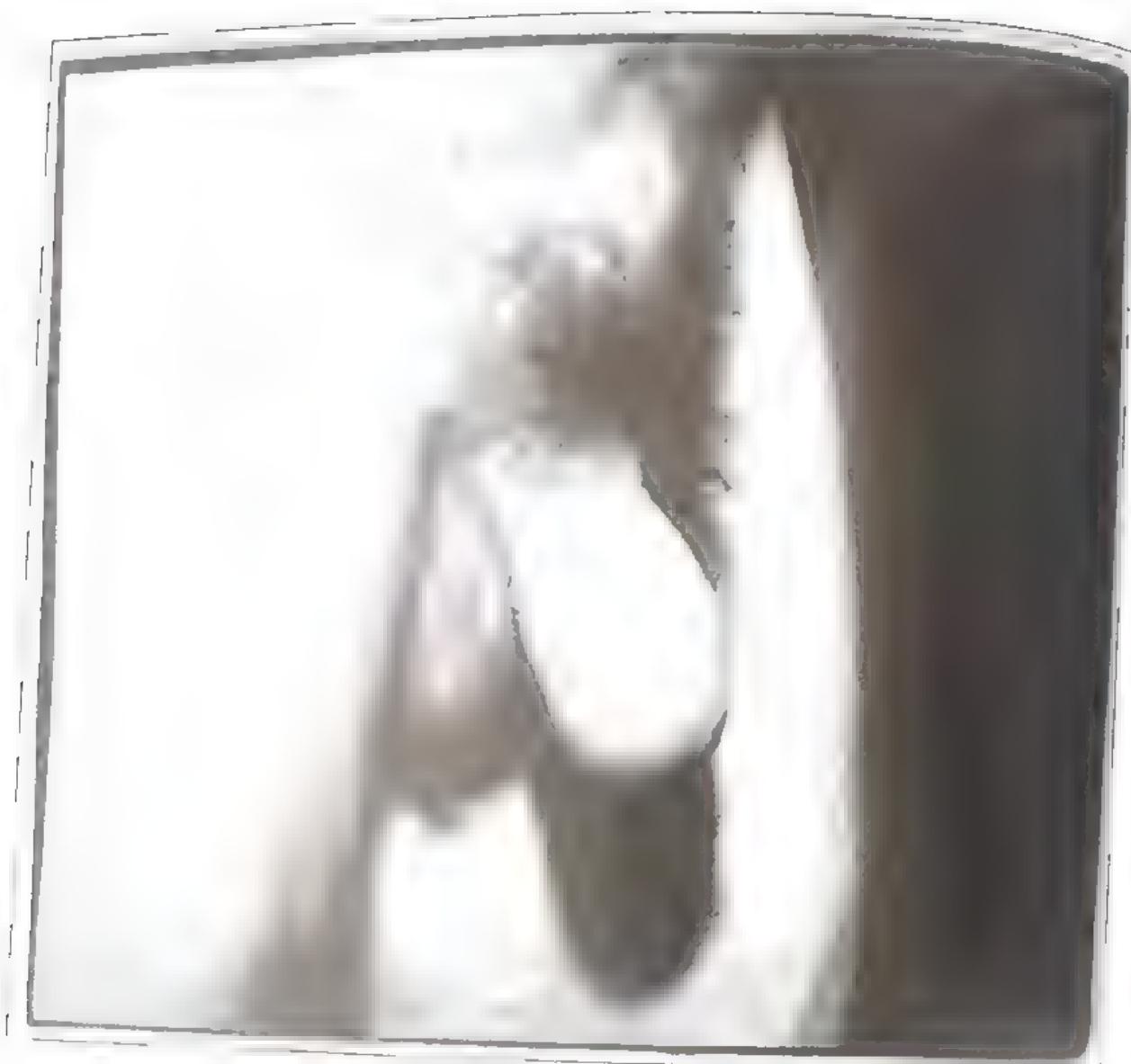
# Phalloplasty: Subject 1

I met my wife and began a personal relationship. During the time we were getting to know each other, I had had several surgeries and was having some cosmetic scar revisions. I didn't really go into it, I didn't tell her I was transsexual.

One evening, we were getting very intimate, and it became obvious that we were going to be sexual. I didn't see how I could stop everything and tell her. So we went into the bedroom, and I thought, maybe it being dark and all, she just wouldn't notice. She grabbed hold of it and started to give me a hand job. Then she abruptly stopped and said, "You haven't always been a man, have you?"

We're still seeing each other, and she hasn't said a whole lot about it other than she thinks it's a little too big to be comfortable. She says it looks fine, but she prefers oral sex to intercourse because it's a bit painful for her.

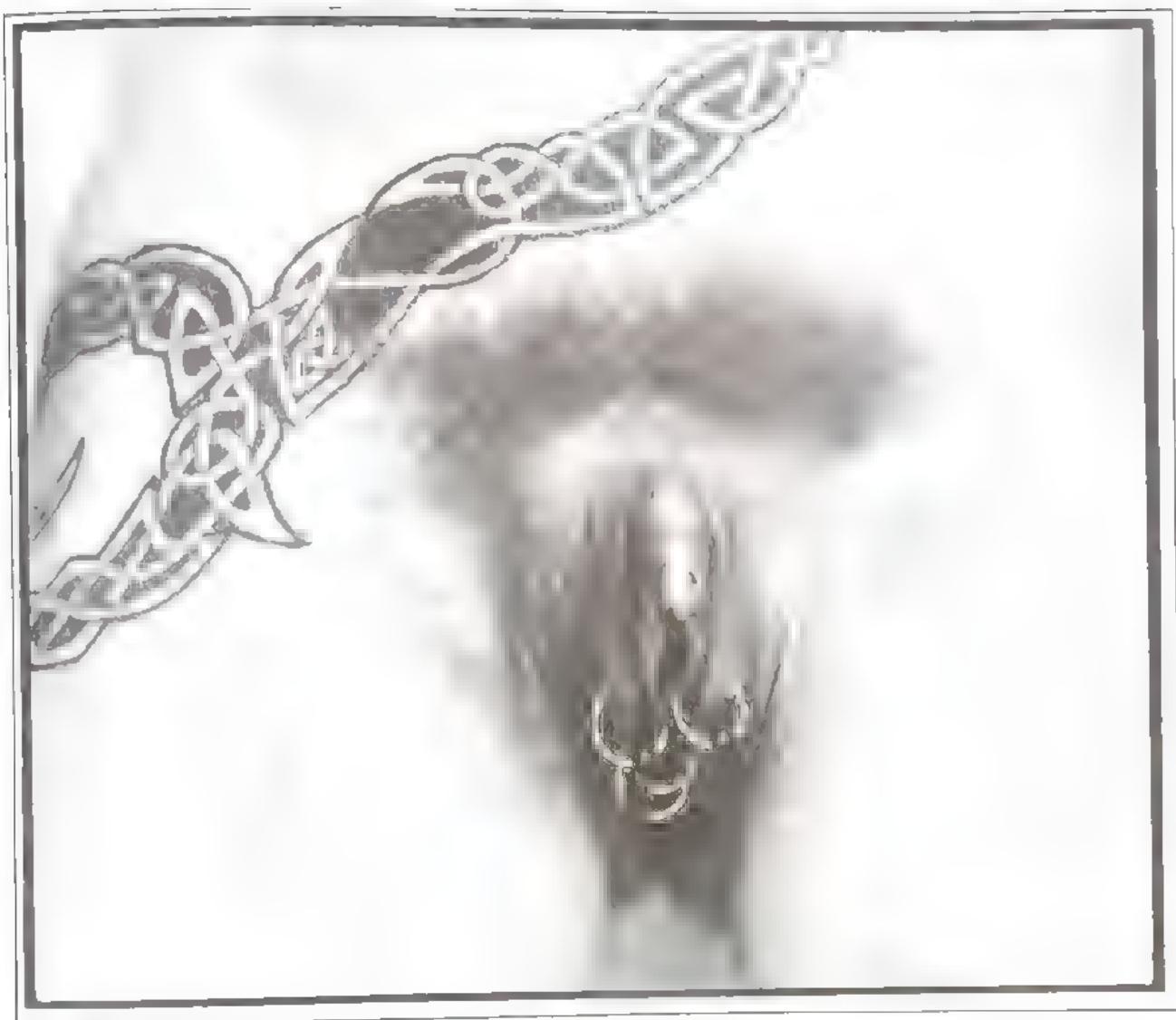






# Alternative Genital Modification

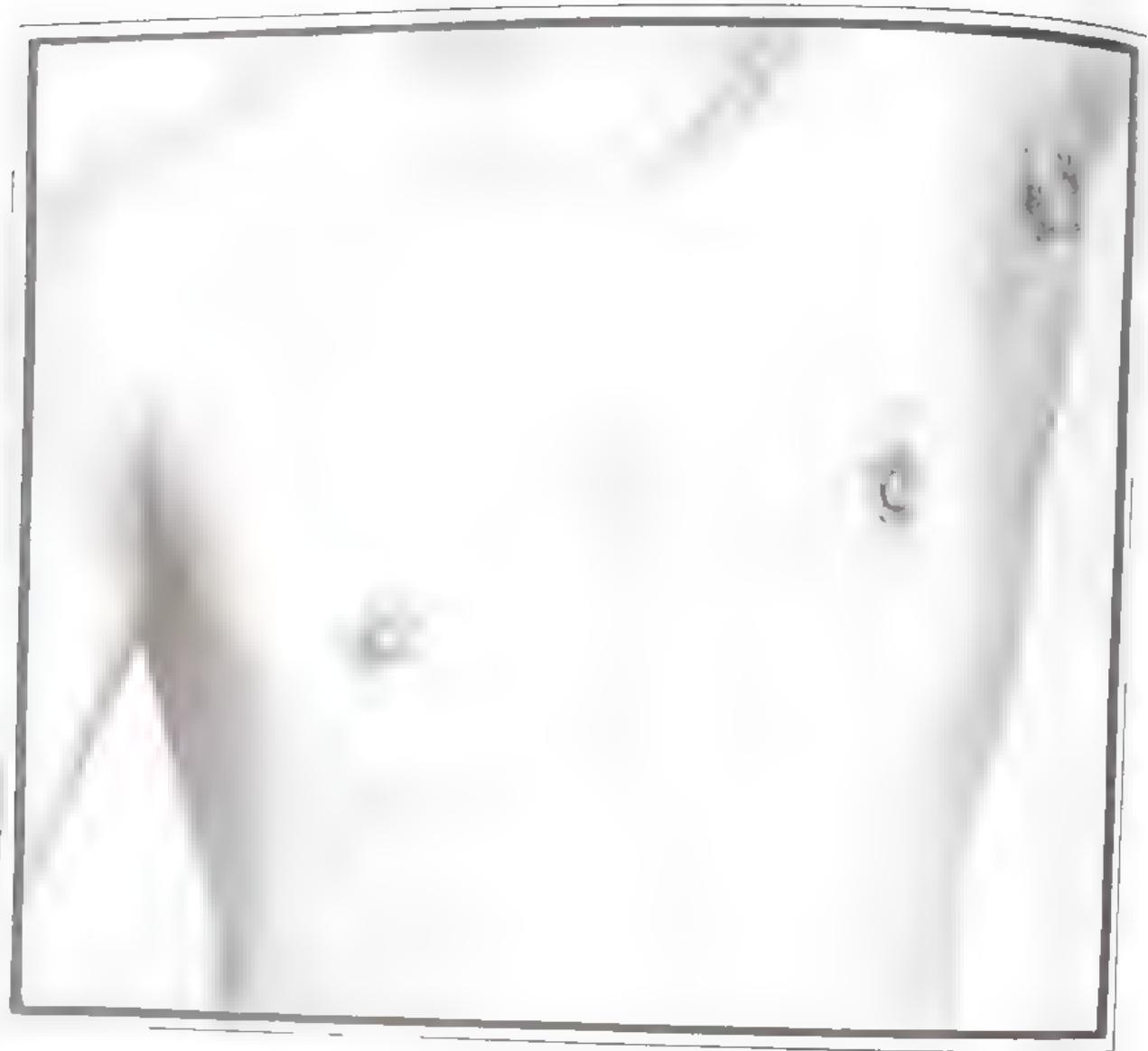
Some transsexual men have been exploring alternatives to genital surgery by modifying their bodies with piercings. The subject in this photograph has been taking testosterone; his clitoral enlargement is hormonally induced through a series of piercings, he is gradually pulling his larger outer labia together with several rings. By doing so, he hopes to produce a scrotum-like appearance and place more visual emphasis on his enlarged clitoris. This type of genital modification is relatively inexpensive and accessible, and does not compromise sexual and excretory functions.



# Chest Reconstruction: Subjects 1 and 2

Many transsexuals need reconstructive surgery on the chest as soon as possible. Surgeons employ different techniques when reconstructing a chest, and much is determined by a person's initial breast size. In the following two examples, Chest Subject 1 has undergone a complex lift, and Chest Subject 2 both nipples have been reconstructed from one nipple and grafted into place. Having had small breasts, Chest Subject 2 underwent a simple reduction in which an incision was made at each nipple and all excess internal fatty tissue was removed. No surface tissue needed to be cut away, and the nipples were not repositioned. He retains all nipple sensation.





Fellas





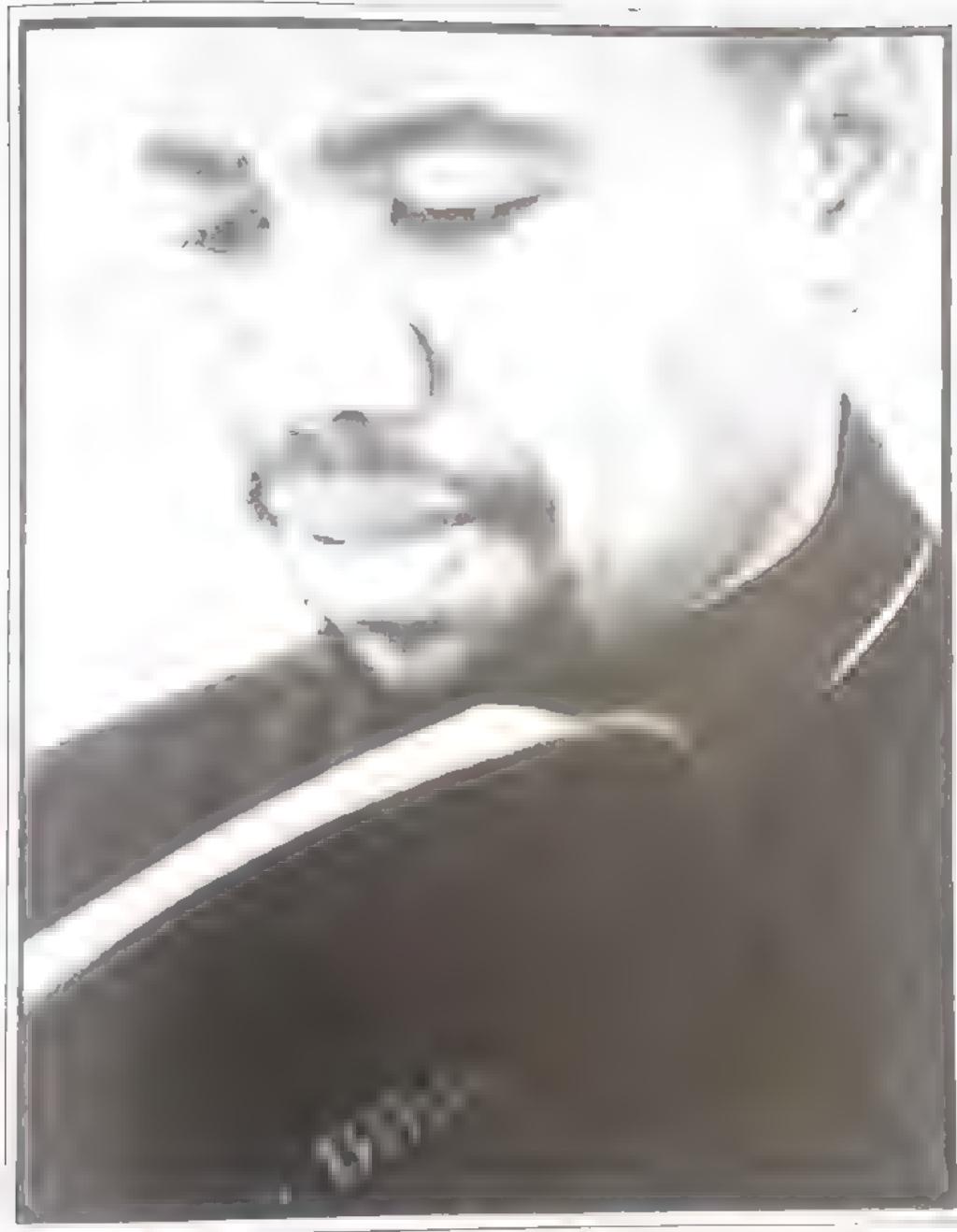
# Sergeant Stephan Thorne

Sgt. Stephan Thorne has been a police officer for sixteen years. Having received a bronze medal of valor, his record with his department is exemplary. He has been a strong voice in affirmative-action policies throughout his career, and in 1994, he set a precedent in the force by transitioning on the job. Since then, he has been largely responsible for transgender sensitivity training among fellow officers.

TONY

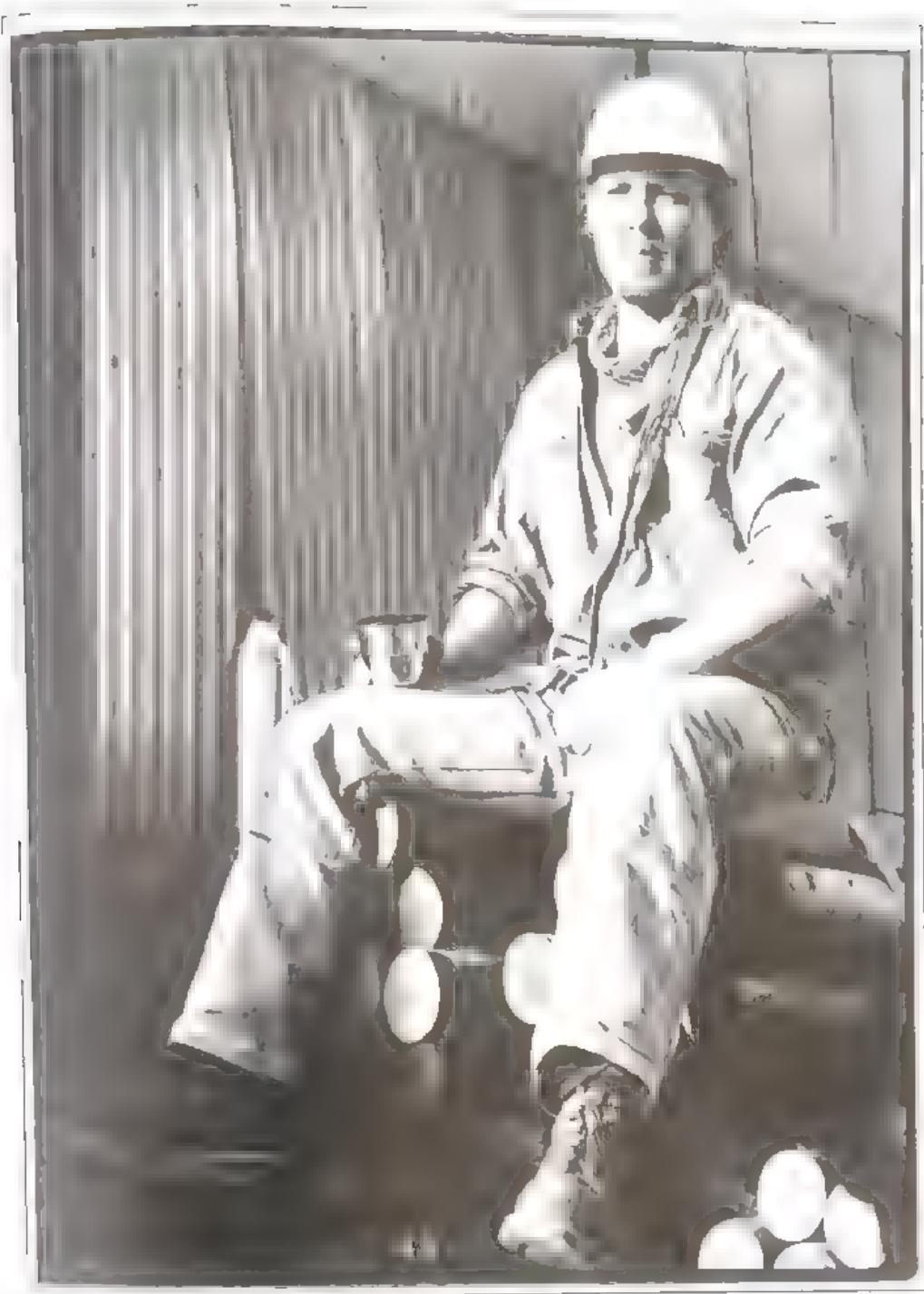
T

ong two children. He served in the United States Army and is now employed as an electrician. A devout member of the Church of Christ, Tony recently met a woman, and they are about to be married.



# Chris

Chris is a skilled blue-collar worker. Struggling as a single parent, he works shifts a day at two different factories. In addition, he manages to maintain a long-distance relationship with his girlfriend by frequently driving three hundred miles to see her. Chris doesn't sleep much.





# Doctor Stephen Whittle

Dr Stephen Whittle teaches law at Manchester Metropolitan University. He coordinates the U.K.'s FTM Network and is vice-president of Press for Change, the lobbying group that campaigns for transsexual rights. Stephen also writes essays on sexuality and gender issues. He lives with his partner of seventeen years, Sarah, and their two children, who were conceived by donor insemination. Dr. Whittle's more casual interests include a狂热的狂热 for the historical lawmen of the American Wild West.

# Chase

As an avid body-building fan, Chase is a self-employed fitness trainer. He is a disciplined, competitive athlete, capable of bench pressing over three hundred pounds during peak conditioning. Chase's other interests include political science and financial investing. Currently, he is in school pursuing a degree.





# Brynn

A writer and graphic designer by profession, Brynn is also a surfing enthusiast and a mother. Passionate about his life since transition, he is committed to progressive political ideals. His life is further enriched by his eighteen-year-old daughter and his wide circle of friends.

# Emergence



# David Harrison

**O**n some level, I was always attracted to men, but I just couldn't relate to them when I was pre-operative. I still like that same sex relationship dynamic. There's something more sexually exciting about it. I don't have an issue with what gender I am. The culture constantly reinforces gender stereotypes in male/female relationships, which makes it very complicated. I know some people enjoy that contrast, but it's not what I prefer.

My attraction to men is very visceral. I enjoy them aesthetically, in terms of muscles, genitals and legs. I look at male bodies a lot, and maybe I look at myself in relation to them because of my own physical evolution as a transsexual man.

When I placed a personal ad for male sex partners, I was completely pre-operative (I had breasts and a vagina), but looked male by all outward appearances. In the ad, I explained that I was female to male, and elaborated more completely to any phone respondents.

I got a lot of responses from men who were primarily straight but said that they were bisexual. In actuality they may have had only one or two experiences with men. When they came over, I wasn't what they expected, although I had told them on the phone that I looked male and that they might not be attracted to me if they were heterosexual. I think it really slipped them out to be dealing with my genitals in the context of such a masculine presence and appearance.

There were a few men who handled it. One of them said that, after being with me, he realized that being sexual wasn't so much about bodies as about erotic energy between two people and that to him, I was a man.







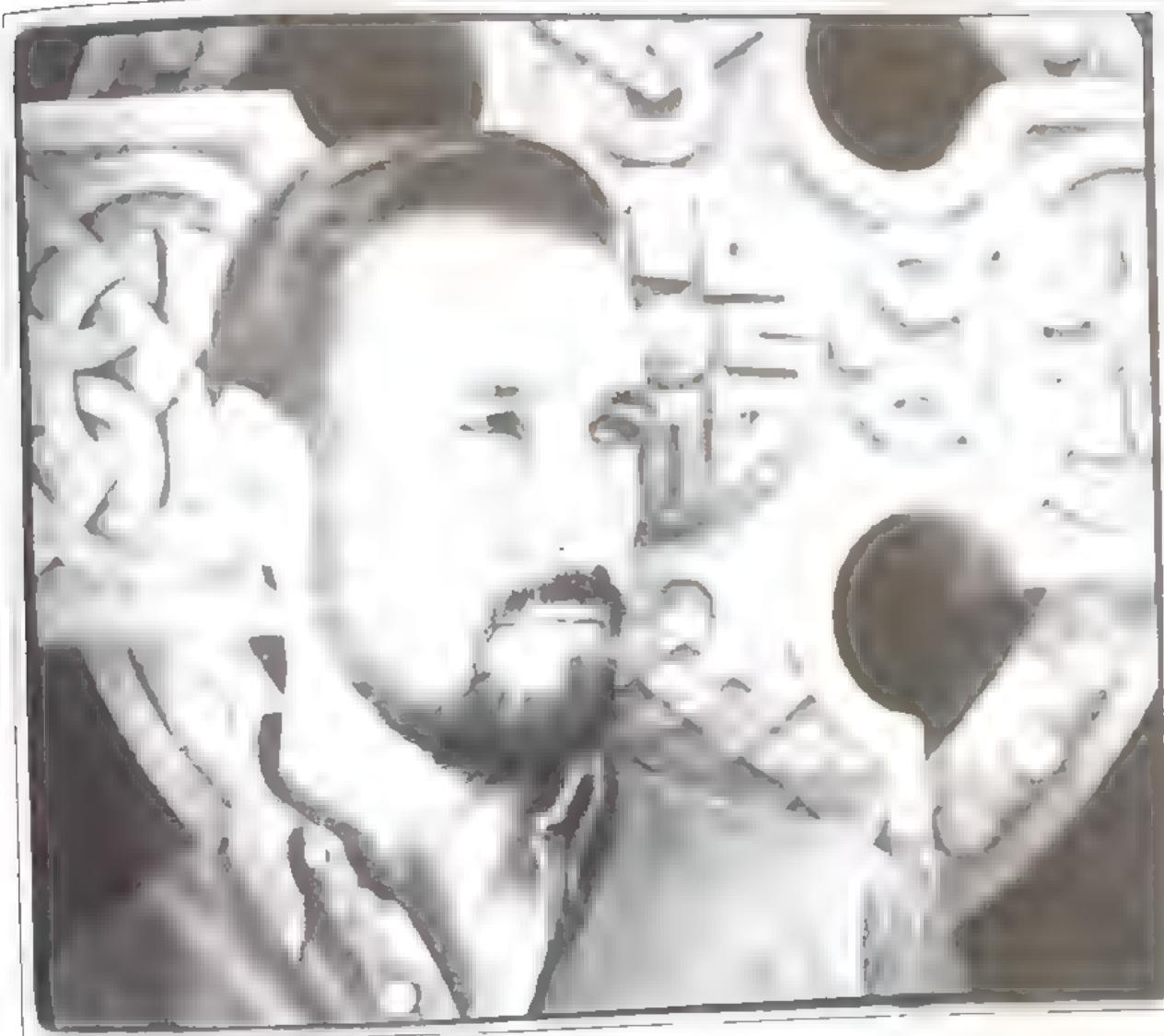
# James Green

I like to descend to Hell and clawing your way back out. People talk about how happy they are when they're just starting hormones when it's all new. That experience was obliterated for me because, during that time, I lost my relationship of thirteen years, the relationship that I thought was the center of my life, and one of unconditional love. Having my children taken away from my daily life was shocking and incredibly depressing.

I was conflicted because, on one hand, I was experiencing a kind of elation as my body was finally taking on the shape I had always wished it to be, but I was also feeling terribly lonely and abandoned. I felt I had lost everything. I was faced with re-inventing every part of my life, and it was extremely challenging, daunting even, and yet there was nothing else I could do but keep going.

After the break-up, I couldn't be intimate with anyone. It was just too painful. It took a couple of years before I could allow myself to be with someone. During the break-up, I began to be afraid that no one would ever want me because of what I had done to myself. I was afraid that other people would perceive my body as mutilated. In fact, right after I returned home from having my lower surgery, while I lay there in pain and catheterized, I just started to cry. I was so scared; all I could say was "Who is going to love me? Who is going to love me now?"







# Shadow Martin

I've been a gay man for about the last three years. I'm pretty matter of fact about it, and I'm with either accepts it or they don't. Sometimes things can get a little tricky along the way, you know. The whole explanation process brings up lots of questions from potential partners. And some of the people I date get kind of harassed by other gay men who say that I'm not really a gay, so if they continue to date me and have sex with me, it means they're really straight. I always respond to them by saying, "A guy having sex with a guy is straight." If you're worried about being straight, we'll go to bed once and talk, and then you can tell me if you've been in bed with a guy or a woman." So far, there's no argument.

Sex is a lot more fun for me now. I'm so much more comfortable. When I'm cruising on the street, I have a sense of latory power and that I'm in complete control. I enjoy exacting a bad boy persona and feeling that I'm doing something I'm not supposed to do.

When I cruised as a woman, I always felt uncomfortable. Nine times out of ten, I got my face slapped. The way I approached women never seemed to be the way they liked being approached. Now, I've found my niche. I can be more aggressive with another man, and although I experience lots of intimate and sensual moments with my male partners, when it comes to sex, it's often good old rough rutting. Sometimes that's all I want. I don't want to get up the next morning and have breakfast with this person. I don't want to know his name or phone number. I just want sex. In the women's community, this kind of sexual expression is almost unheard of.

The act of cruising and tricking is not only sexually exhilarating for me but it can also be very validating. It's kind of a recognition thing, you know. These are gay guys, and they wouldn't be tricking with a female. But I know I don't have to go out there to prove anything. As I become more comfortable with who I am as a guy, I don't have to use other people's images and points of view to validate anything about my masculinity. I've already been doing that for myself.







# Loren Cameron

So much about my coming to manhood has been about a quest for size. I mean, I really need to be a big man. All of the men I've looked to as role models have been body builders and athletes. They seem like gods and great beasts to me in their huge and beautiful bodies. I envy them. I want to be like them. They look so virile and invincible.

I know deeply that being a man and having strength isn't at all about my maximum bench press, but it doesn't seem to matter. All I can say is that, as my muscles grow, being five foot three... isn't feel quite so small.

Sometimes I wonder if I ever feel big enough. I wonder if I'll ever feel safe in this body.







# Mark Valerio

I took a few years for me to comfortably identify as a heterosexual man without going through. After all those years of living in the lesbian community and all that indoctrinated feminism of a certain type, it was really hard to confess my current sexual identity.

I identify as a heterosexual man, you know, male. I really seen as sexist in some way. I mean, just looking at a beautiful woman can get you into trouble. When I've said, "Now I understand things like prostitution and pornography because my sex drive has gone up," I've received a lot of criticism. When I say, "I like being a man in relation to a man because I like... being stronger," I mean because I have more muscle mass now, that I'm on testosterone. But I don't think any less of women for it.

Guys all over the world are apologizing for being men and are trying to create a sense of equality with women. Some say that this friction or war between the sexes is all a socialization thing and that if we could fix society then everything would be okay. But when you take hormones and change your biological sex, you realize it has to be more. There's something profoundly physical going on.









# Kayt

I always knew I wanted to be a girl, despite the numerous beatings and rejections on my passage into the relentlessly gender-divided world. Nonetheless, I was raised as the youngest son, wearing my brother's hand-me-down jeans, T shirts and work shirts through high school. I was fortunate to have a mother who allowed me great latitude to express masculinity, who in fact said nothing when I decided to wear my brother's clip-on tie to kindergarten with my usual cut-off shorts. (She later believed this "mistake" to be the cause of both my lesbianism and my dysphoria.) I was sent home to change, but I don't recall anyone ever really explaining why. Years later, having more or less finally accepted my female body, I still take my shirt off every chance I get, and I dress, stand and walk much the same as I did back then.

## Loren

The first time I saw Kayt was at my art opening. I clumped her through the milling crowd as she stood there looking at me with brilliant green eyes. We didn't speak that night, not until a year later did we actually meet. When we introduced ourselves I remember being impressed by her masculinity. I had never been attracted to someone like her before, but she was handsome, and I recognized something in her I saw my reflection in those eyes, and somehow that someone was me.





Kayt

With each conversation about our relationship, I'm facing myself in a new way and facing what my life might have been like had I taken a different path. Many times, the reflection—or lack of reflection—I've seen in Loren has been just too much to face. When I feel this anger and despair, I try to remind myself that beneath these shells, we are both human, searching for love, comfort and self-worth. Despite our struggles, I feel very lucky to have found a partner who can see beyond the body, who really sees me.

## Loren

W e are so much alike that it's painful when we are different. I have mood swings sometimes, and Kayt feels that it's harder for me to bear her then, and her anxiety frustrates me. It's difficult for me to recognize the change in my behavior. Growing impatient with her, I begin to lose my temper. I feel angry and scared and mean. Arguing, we emotionally attack and deflect one another until we reach an impasse. We shut each other out, retreating into bristling, growling sadness. Again, a sameness, but repelling like the wrong ends of two magnets.





# Kayt

I have this idea in my head that transsexuals, like artists, are supposed to be the struggling ones, and that their partners are supposed to be the stable, nurturing ones, these unsung heroines here, standing behind their new men. But I've always been FTM-identified. Although I sometimes feel bad about not being more traditionally nurturing, more actively supportive of Loren's art or of his difficult journey, I know I offer him an *othe* sort of comfort that same thing being loved by someone cut from the same cloth, who in many ways feels the same pain and needs the same things. Loren and I are mirrors for one another. That is what our intimacy is all about.

# Loren

I can go places with her that I could not go before. Kayt makes it safe for me to take me there, but I never feel less than. And in turn, offering her own vulnerability, she can invite me all the same. There is a queer familiarity to our love, a trusting likeness.





## Kayt

I hang out in the lesbian community, so it's hard to avoid gender pronouns without feeling like I'm hiding something. I don't feel comfortable just saying that I'm with a man. Yet it's such a complex thing to go into when I'm with my friends if I have a girlfriend. I mean, they take one look at me and ask, "What's her name?" They don't expect to get a major social education!

I forget though how well my friends know me. In a way, I've been through this before with most of them...butch-on-butch didn't always go over so well, and then when I showed up in a skirt, they thought it was a joke. Still, I'm always relieved to see the recognition in their eyes when they say "Actually, you know for you that kinda makes . . . ."

Loren

K

we have arrived at do better than not real y at from the other. It is a c comfort in our rowing. How could any two people be closer?





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ISBN 1-57344-062-0



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